

**Town of Epsom
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
December 26, 2023 at 6:00 PM**

Cheryl Gilpatrick, Chair
Virginia Drew, Vice Chair
Meadow Wysocki

Approved: Drew / Wysocki
Vote: In favor, 3-0

Call to Order:

Ms. Gilpatrick called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

Ms. Wysocki led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Staff Present: Andrea Novotney, Administrative Assistant to the Select Board; Deb Sullivan, Finance Administrator; Stewart Yeaton, Fire Chief; Glenn Horner, ZBA Chair

Others Presents: Rob Topik; Lyla Boyjjan; Bob McKechnie, Town Maintenance Person

Review and Accept or Amend the Agenda

Ms. Gilpatrick added Warrant Article 16 for discussion. Ms. Drew added a non-public under RSA 91-A:3 II(c).

Motion by: Ms. Drew to accept the agenda as amended. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously: 3-0.**

Finance Report

Motion by: Ms. Drew to accept a donation of \$75 from the Stephen W. Winchester Trust to the Meetinghouse Historic Trust Fund. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously: 3-0.**

Ms. Sullivan presented the MS-60A (selection of auditors) for signature and it was signed by Ms. Gilpatrick. Ms. Sullivan informed the Board that access to the escrow accounts has been updated and she is now able to view the accounts and Ms. Mates (Treasurer) is an authorized signer. Ms. Sullivan noted that the Meals and Room Tax in the amount of \$458,334 will be received on 12/27/2023 and the Warrant Articles have been sent to the DRA for review. Ms. Sullivan stated the DRA had referred Warrant Articles 16 and 17 to Town counsel for review and Town counsel advised the two Warrant Articles should be combined into one.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to recommend the new wording, as proposed by the attorney, to include member appointments into Warrant Article 16 and remove Warrant Article 17. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously: 3-0.**

The Board and Ms. Sullivan discussed the presentation of the Warrant Articles to the Budget Committee, and it will be noted that the DRA has not yet approved the final wording. Ms. Sullivan presented the

expenditures to date report and the list of the requested encumbrances by the Department Heads. The Board and Ms. Sullivan determined that the upper and middle parking lot project will use the remaining \$19,000 in ARPA funds and the remainder will be encumbered.

Scheduled Appointments:

Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) Chair: Alternate Member Recommendation

Mr. Horner, ZBA Chair, explained Ms. Boyjian's interest in serving on the ZBA. Ms. Boyjian informed the Board that former ZBA member Ryan Kehoe had recommended she join the Board and she was interested in doing so after recently completing a property law class. Mr. Horner explained to the Board that ZBA alternate member Prescott Towle has submitted his resignation from the Board.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to appoint Lyla Boyjian to an alternate member position on the ZBA through 3/31/2026. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to accept, with appreciation for the years served, Prescott Towle's resignation from the ZBA and to wish him well. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

Public Hearing: Unanticipated Revenue From the State of NH

Ms. Gilpatrick opened the Public Hearing at 6:30 PM to receive public input on the acceptance of unanticipated revenue in the amounts of \$37,298 and \$28,249 from the State of New Hampshire per RSA 31:95-b.

- \$37,298 One-time Highway Block Grant Aid.
- \$28,249 One-time Municipally Owned Bridge Allocation.

Public Comment:

Mr. Topik asked if the Town knows in advance the amounts that will be received. Ms. Sullivan explained that these are one-time payments from the State and the Town gets notification about a month in advance but does not get notification concerning the amounts until a few days before receipt.

Ms. Gilpatrick closed the Public Hearing at 6:45 PM.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to accept the unanticipated revenue in the amounts of \$37,298 and \$28,249 from the State of NH. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

Fire Chief: Drone Quotes

The Board reviewed the drone quotes with the Fire Chief and discussed the drone features and licensing. It was the consensus of the Board to approve the Chief's recommended quote. The Chief detailed for the Board his recent trip to DC on behalf of the Capital Area Mutual Aid Fire Compact and stated he felt it had been very productive.

Administrative Assistant

Ms. Novotney inquired if the Board would like to change the February 19th meeting day to the 20th, as it conflicts with Presidents' Day, and it was the consensus of the Board to do so. Ms. Novotney explained she had recently done the NHMA 2023 legislative wrap-up webinar and has signed up for alerts on

LegiScan and will be doing the 2024 legislative webinar in January. Ms. Novotney noted she has been organizing the materials provided to new board, committee, and commission members so it will be a more efficient process for Ms. Rheume and herself. Ms. Novotney informed the Board that after the recent computer upgrades it was decided that the ability to do the monthly tax map updates should be downloaded to Ms. Rheume's computer instead of Ms. Novotney's. Ms. Novotney noted that the new debit/credit card machines have been received and the installation and training is scheduled for 1/8/2024.

Discussion

Encumbrances

The Board reviewed the proposed encumbrances presented by Ms. Sullivan.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to encumber \$177,915.67. to cover the identified expenditures as of 12/26/2023.

Second by: Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

2024 Elections – Update

Ms. Drew stated the Secretary of State's Office has sent out virtual election trainings. Ms. Gilpatrick noted that Ms. Scarbo continues to work on recruiting election volunteers and will have an update for the Board by the next meeting. Ms. Novotney was instructed to draft a posting for the website and Facebook page seeking election volunteers. Ms. Drew requested that Ms. Novotney also post the Budget Committee public hearing notice to the Facebook page when that is received. It was the consensus of the Board to adjust the start time of the 1/22/24 Board meeting to 6:30PM to accommodate election set-up.

Private Road Creation

Ms. Wysocki stated she had been contacted by a resident who wants to turn his driveway into a private road and after discussions with Fire, Police, Highway, and Zoning there did not appear to be a reason why this could not be done. The Board discussed road signage and a private road maintenance agreement. Mr. McKechnie asked if this is a Town road being turned into a private road and Ms. Wysocki explained it is a driveway and discussed the resident's concerns regarding street numbering and mail/package delivery.

Building Maintenance

The Board and Mr. McKechnie discussed preventative building maintenance along with current maintenance issues. Mr. McKechnie informed the Board of a leak at the Meetinghouse and offered to meet with Milestone to determine if this was a previously repaired area or a new leak. If it is a new leak, Mr. McKechnie will generate a repair quote for the Board. Mr. McKechnie also informed the Board about a leak at the Library. Ms. Novotney will provide Mr. McKechnie with information concerning the contractor who did the Library roof replacement. The Board also discussed drainage around the Library, yearly landscape clean-up, and the drainage plan that is part of the upper and middle parking lot paving project. Ms. Drew asked Mr. McKechnie to provide a bullet point list of maintenance items. The Board and Mr. McKechnie also discussed pest control for Town owned buildings and Ms. Novotney will contact Chief Michael and the Food Pantry to determine who they are currently using.

Old Library

Ms. Novotney stated she has been in contact with Ms. Camidge concerning keys to the building and will receive those after the first of the year. The Board discussed touring the building and arranging a meeting with the Historical Association.

Signature / Approval Items:

- Supplemental Intent to Cut U12-12 - Signed

Public Comment

Rob Topik

Mr. Topik asked if the legal review of his petitioned zoning amendments was complete. Ms. Gilpatrick stated the statutory deadline for acceptance had not ended yet when they had been received and they will be on the agenda for the next Planning Board meeting which Mr. Topik is welcome to attend. Mr. Topik asked if it was correct that the Town had recently undergone a computer upgrade and entered into a new contract for IT services and Ms. Gilpatrick confirmed this to be correct. Mr. Topik stated he would like to dispute the Town's requirement that a new, sealed thumb drive must be submitted with a right-to-know request to be made available on a thumb drive, as he feels the Town's new IT upgrades would be able to scan for any problems. Ms. Drew stated that requiring a new, sealed thumb drive is considered a best practice for cyber security reasons. Mr. Topik stated his belief that this requirement is a restriction of access to public records.

Select Board Reports

Ms. Wysocki

Economic Development Committee: The December Committee meeting was postponed. The letters to landowners requesting permission to post the Economic Revitalization Zone signs have been mailed out.

Welfare: Ms. Hickey has been very busy assisting residents during the holiday season and providing advice on money management and budgeting.

Budget Committee: The Committee has started reviewing the Town and School budgets. The ZBA Chair met with the Committee and requested a budget increase due to an increase in applications and the Committee granted the request. Ms. Wysocki noted the Committee questioned if the Food Pantry should be paying for their share of the utilities and reduced the electricity line. Ms. Wysocki explained that the Committee understands the Fire Department's need to increase their internet speed but did not approve the increase to their budget.

Conservation Commission: The Town Forest Timber Harvest is almost finished, and the parking lot expansion and new culvert is done and reviewed by the Road Agent. The Board discussed the Town being an abutter to a Class VI Road and if that would give the Town authorization to work on that road. Ms. Wysocki noted the Commission is still waiting to hear from the Department of Corrections about signs and costs.

Ms. Drew

Zoning Compliance: The ZCO is working on a few ongoing issues and has been fielding several calls.

BCEP: Ms. Drew has provided Ms. Novotney with an updated list of BCEP meetings to be added to the Town Calendar. Ms. Drew stated she is working on arranging a meeting with the Select Board members in the member towns to review the agreement.

Zoning Board of Adjustment: The Board had a Public Hearing last week that was voted to be continued until January 17, 2024.

Library: Ms. Drew stated there may be an issue with how the Library places their outside items due to the ongoing drainage issues. Ms. Wysocki asked if the Library will need to come before the Board to request permission for these outside items and Ms. Drew explained they did come before the Board last Spring.

Old Meetinghouse Revitalization Committee: The Committee will be meeting 1/9/24 and will be reviewing the Charter and working on donar letters of recognition.

Food Panty: Ms. Drew explained she has requested the Food Pantry statistics so they can be provided to the Budget Committee. The Board discussed having these statistics be included in the Food Pantry report in the Town Report. The Board discussed the importance of the services provided by the Food Pantry and Ms. Wysocki noted that the Town has provided space for the Food Pantry for years, prior to their new location, and has never required utility reimbursement.

Police Department: Ms. Drew stated that while recently serving a warrant one of the officers was assaulted and the Department dealt with a serious motor vehicle accident on Route 4. The Chief reports that Officer Mullins is doing very well with his field training and Officer Konig has passed his physical exam for the Police Academy. Ms. Drew noted the letter Chief Michael sent to the Board detailing the Department's 2023 accomplishments and 2024 goals and his appreciation for the Select Board's support. Ms. Drew stated how much she appreciates Chief Michael's excellent communication with the Board.

Ms. Gilpatrick

Town Clerk: The Clerk continues to work on recruiting election volunteers and will have an update by the next Board meeting. She has received about a dozen absentee ballots so far.

Tax Collector: The online tax payment system is off until the new year when the new credit/debit card machine and software will be up and running. Ms. Scarbo will be using the 2024 dog tags starting next week.

Highway Department: The Road Agent reports there have been a few more washouts to fix from the last rainstorm, which should be done by the end of this week, otherwise he is just waiting for snow.

Parks & Recreation Commission: Chair Wysocki reports the Commission has paid for the work to remove the leaning tree and this cost put their budget over an additional \$2,750 to end the year \$3,800 over budget. He also notes a pick-up truck load of debris was removed from the Park after the last bad rain storm but the decent temperatures and weather have helped with the upkeep and maintenance of the Park.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by: Ms. Drew to approve the 12/11/23 minutes as amended. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to approve the 12/18/23 Select Board and Library Trustees joint meeting minutes as written. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to approve the 12/18/23 minutes as amended. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

Non-Public

Motion by: Ms. Drew to enter in non-public under RSA 91-A:3 II(c) at 8:54 PM. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote:** Ms. Drew – Aye, Ms. Wysocki – Aye, Ms. Gilpatrick – Aye.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to exit non-public at 9:25 PM. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote:** Ms. Drew – Aye, Ms. Wysocki – Aye, Ms. Gilpatrick – Aye.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to seal the minutes. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote:** Ms. Drew – Aye, Ms. Wysocki – Aye, Ms. Gilpatrick – Aye.

Adjournment

With no additional business to come before the Board at this time,

Motion by: Ms. Drew to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 PM. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Novotney
Administrative Assistant